

Carl Mansfield had colorful careers

As mortician, merchant, mathematician



W. C. MANSFIELD, mathematical whiz, seated in his office surrounded by memories including senior golf championships at Orchard Hills, which he won three years straight. Mansfield has served on the Riverview Savings and Loan Association board 43 years.

Champion golfer, catcher

When Webster Carl Mansfield came to Camas in 1922, he had rather expected to work in the bank started by his father, W. A. Mansfield, but it didn't work out that way.

Roy Dobbs was managing the bank satisfactorily, so Mansfield, 33, bought Camas Mercantile from Robert W. Carmack, James Carmack's father, and the Mansfields operated the store for 26 years.

A man of many talents, restless energy and sturdy physique, Mansfield not only was a cowboy at a youthful age, but attended business college, and later learned to be an undertaker. He buried all the people who died in Stapleton, Nebr., for about 10 or 12 years, the last six while he was also working at the local bank. He learned much from his father about business, banking, records and farming.

Among other activities, Mansfield operated a store, sold dynamite for people clearing stumps or logging, lent money, bought real estate contracts, and for 43 years, has served on the board of directors of Riverview Savings and Loan Association (formerly Clarke County Savings and Loan Association). He also

played championship golf.

Born June 6, 1889, in a two-room sod house with a board floor ("we were proud of that floor"), Mansfield was the first child of eight. His father taught school and was a part-time farmer. Carl's mother died when he was two years old, after she had another child, Carl's sister Mabel.

His father remarried and this family had two children, Olive and Earl. After the second wife died, Carl's father married again and had four more children.

Carl was the oldest child and when he was still very young, he and his father took up extensive free range land in Nebraska, where they kept cattle. Mansfield recalls they had three saddle horses when he was only eight years old. He became "a cowboy" at a very young age. They later sold the farm and moved to the small community of Ganby.

As a lad of 14, Carl heard a blind Presbyterian evangelist who came to Ganby where they were living. Carl was converted and has tried to lead a Christian life ever since.

He and his wife, Pearl, expected he would go into the armed services in World War I, but the armistice was signed three days before he was to leave. The Mansfields

had one daughter, Eleanor, born in Stapleton. She and her husband, Fred Weakley, a former Clark County commissioner in the 1950s, and a former manager of the Port of Camas-Washougal, now live in Newport, Ore., but they have property interests in Fern Prairie.

After the Mansfields had bought Camas Mercantile in the fall of 1922, they sustained considerable loss when the store burned. The Ten Cent Store next door had caught fire and spread to the Mansfields' store. Bob Carmack was building the present Carmack building on what is now NE 4th Ave., and NE Cedar, and Mansfields moved into that location. It later became Camas Department Store, and is now Burden's Rexall Drug.

After Mansfields sold the store, Carl, who had learned about the processing of abstracts, recording deeds, making of loans, and other useful business procedures, began to buy up real estate contracts and began lending money. He was an expert mathematician, and could figure interest in his head faster than most people could with machines. His built-in computer still functions very well on figures. But he does have an adding machine on his desk.

Mansfield acquired 18 houses and still has 12 of them, which his grandson manages. The Mansfields acquired a 40-acre farm out near Lackamas Lake, beyond Camp Currie.

"It was a bargain," he recalled. The place had a two-story house with full basement, a gigantic barn, a 75-foot chicken house and some other buildings.

It had originally been owned by Albert Stebbins, but was owned by a retired street car man who wanted to sell when Mansfields bought. They bought it all for about \$10,000. They acquired additional acreage jointly with the Fred Weakleys.

The Mansfields lived at the farm for seven years, raising hay and cattle. They also built another house on the place. At the time of Mrs. Mansfield's death, the property was appraised at \$1,000 an acre. Mansfield still goes out to the farm almost daily and does chores.

Mansfield now lives at 823 NE 4th Ave., Camas, a house he bought from Walter Marchbank about 45 years ago. His father died there March 10, 1931, of diabetes.

W. A. Mansfield Sr. earlier had built the large house, later to be known as the Fred Beltz place in Evergreen Terrace on Oak Street. This was a very large home, with 5 bedrooms, and 2 bathrooms, which was rare for those days.

and later took up golf. Three times in succession he was senior club champion at Orchard Hills Golf and Country Club in the 1950s. He was a charter member of the club.

In more recent years, he has had some difficulty with his eyes and he no longer types on his 1917 wing-style Oliver typewriter, but he can still use his hand-operated Victor adding machine on his desk. He has a special lamp at his pew in the Camas United Methodist Church, where he attends almost every Sunday.

His real estate and banking talents have apparently passed on to his grandson, Gregg Weakley, now a loan officer in a Portland bank. Gregg manages most of Mansfield's properties. Gail Gregg, Carl's granddaughter, lives now in Boise, Idaho, has three children, Scott, Tiffany and Bryan Jeffrey (born June 22).

Carl's wife, Pearl, had a busy life. She kept active in the Methodist Church, and was in Eastern Star, Amaranth and other organizations. She died Feb. 25, 1973, and Carl's life has slowed down somewhat. He no longer sells dynamite powder as he did for many years.

But for 87, he keeps a spry pace, plays solitaire with jumbo cards he has, visits with Mrs. Elsie Norman, his housekeeper and cook, and looks back

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Carl's three brothers were Lawrence, Marion and Loy. Marion, known as "Snix," was a fine football player and had offers of college athletic scholarships, but decided to work in the paper mill instead. He had a good aptitude with tools, and rapidly worked up to machine tender. Lawrence also is a machine tender. Loy retired from Western Transportation Co. Carl's sister Ruby, lives in Portland, and travels widely with her husband.

As a young man, Carl was 6-feet, 3-inches tall, always thin, and now weighs but 135 lbs. He played the catcher position in baseball.

on a lively, steady growth of the Riverview Savings and Loan, where he has served as a director for 43 years.

"They have \$850,000 in undivided dividends," the longtime board member says. "And some \$35 million in savers' deposits." Mansfield always was good at mathematics, and apparently always will be.

His home faces south, and from his front porch or front room, he can look down 4th Avenue to the impressive Riverview Savings block, where the Camas Inn once stood.

For Carl Mansfield, a world of memories is all tied to that familiar old main street of Camas.